

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O R 111106Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3501

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 2701

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, MARR, VN, VS

SUBJECT: APPROACH TO ICCS REGARDING ATTACK ON BAN ME THUOT

1. MINPOL CALLED SUCCESSIVELY ON INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR SUHUD (WHO IS CHAIRMAN FOR MARCH) AND IRANIAN AMBASSADOR ESFANDIARY MORNING MARCH 11 TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON SITUATION RESULTING FROM ATTACK ON BAN ME THUOT. MINPOL NOTED THAT ACTTACK IS CLEAR-CUT VIOLATION OF PARIS AGREEMENT WITHOUT CONCEIVABLE JUSTIFICATION. HE NOTED THAT US HAS PARTICULAR REASON FOR CONCERN IN THAT THERE IS A GROUP OF NINE AMERICANS IN BAN ME THUOT, ALL BUT ONE PRIVATE CITIZENS ; AND THAT WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED FOR THE SAFETY OF THE INDONESIAN AND IRANIAN OFFICERS IN THE ICCS TEAM-SITE AT BAN ME THUOT.

2. MINPOL STATED WE WOULD BE INTERESTED TO KNOW WHAT ACTION THE ICCS COULD TAKE IN THIS SITUATION. SUHUD MADE NO COMMENT ON SITUATION OR ON STATUS OF ICCS OFFICERS IN BAN ME THUOT. MINPOL NOTED THAT ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 2 OF THE ICCS PROTOCOL THE COMMISSION "SHALL" INVESTIGATE VIOLATIONS IN ANY CASE WHERE IT HAS ADEQUATE GROUNDS FOR CONSIDERING THAT ONE HAS OCCURRED. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE SUGGESTED THAT THE INDONESIANS AND IRANIANS CITING THIS CLAUSE OF ARTICLE 2 MIGHT REQUEST INVESTIGATION OF

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ATTACK ON BAN ME THUOT AND MAKE THEIR REQUEST PUBLIC. HE FELT THIS

WOULD PUT STRONG PRESSURE ON POLES AND HUNGARIANS TO GO ALONG WITH SOME KIND OF INVESTIGATION.

3. AMBASSADOR SUHUD APPEARED TO RECEIVE THIS SUGGESTION IN DEEP THOUGHT BUT DID NOT COMMENT. HE ONLY NOTED THE PROBLEM INHERENT IN THE UNANIMITY RULE.

4. AMBASSADOR ESFANDIARY SAID HE FELT FIRST PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO SAFETY OF TWO ICCS OFFICERS IN BAN ME THUOT (ONE IRANIAN AND ONE INDONESIAN) AND TO THE NINE AMERICANS. HE FEARED THAT DISCUSSION OF LARGER ISSUES WOULD IMPEDE AGREEMENT ON EFFORT TO RESCUE THEM. WE WELCOMED THIS SUGGESTION, WHICH ESFANDIARY PROCEEDED TO CARRY OUT AT "CONSULTATIVE" MEETING WHICH CONVENED LATER IN MORNING.

5. FOLLOWING ICCS "CONSULTATIVE" MEETING, AMBASSADOR ESFANDIARY INFORMED US THAT, AFTER MUCH DISCUSSION AND UNHELPFUL INTERVENTION OF POLISH AMBASSADOR AN AGREEMENT WAS REACHED THAT THE CHAIRMAN (AMBASSADOR SUHUD) WOULD CONTACT THE TWO SIDES TO INFORM THEM OF THE PLIGHT OF THE ONE INDONESIAN AND THE ONE IRANIAN OFFICER REMAINING IN BAN ME THUOT AND TO DISCUSS MODALITIES FOR THEIR RESCUE. ESFANDIARY THEN ATTEMPTED TO HAVE THE NINE AMERICANS IN BAN ME THUOT INCLUDED WITH THE TWO ICCS OFFICERS BUT FOUND NO SUPPORT FOR THIS FROM ANYBODY AT THE MEETING. THE OBJECTION WAS MADE THAT TO DO THIS MIGHT "NEGATE THE DIFFICULT TASK ALREADY GIVEN THE CHAIRMAN."

6. HOWEVER, ESFANDIARY BELIEVES THAT, IF THE CHAIRMAN IS SUCCESSFUL ARRANGING TO RESCUE THE TWO ICCS OFFICERS, THIS MIGHT "PAVE THE WAY" FOR RESCUING THE NINE AMERICANS AS WELL. HE TOLD US THAT, WHILE THIS COULD NOT BE DISCUSSED AT THE FULL MEETING, HE WILL BRING IT UP IN PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH THE OTHER DELEGATIONS.

7. COMMENT: ESFANDIARY'S INITIATIVE IS MOST WELCOME AS IN MEANTIME WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO FOLLOW THROUGH TODAY WITH PLAN FOR EXTRICATION OF NINE AMERICANS WITH OUR OWN ASSETS (SEE SEPTTEL) AND IT IS JUST POSSIBLE THAT ICCS ROUTE MIGHT SUCCEED.

8. WE HAVE KEPT MFA FULLY INFORMED OF ABOVE DEVELOPMENTS.
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9. REQUEST PARTICULAR PAINS BE TAKEN BY ADDRESSEES NOT TO COMPROMISE ESFANDIARY'S PLAN FOR "INCLUDING" AMERICANS IN RESCUE OF ICCS OFFICERS. ANY PUBLICITY WHATEVER COULD SPOIL EFFORT AS WELL AS EMBARRASS ESFANDIARY AND OURSELVES.
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